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Advancement of women

Implementation of the outcome of the Fourth World Conference on Women

Human rights questions: human rights situations and reports of special rapporteurs and representatives

Letter dated 21 September 1999 from the Permanent Representative of Pakistan to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

I have the honour to enclose the statement of the Government of Pakistan (see annex) issued in response to the statement issued by the European Union on 13 August 1999 (A/53/1045, annex).

I should be grateful if you could have the present letter and its annex circulated as a document of the General Assembly under agenda items No. 109, 110 and 116 (c).

(*Signed*) Inam ul **Haque**
Ambassador
Permanent Representative

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Annex

Statement of the Government of Pakistan issued in Islamabad on 21 September 1999

1. Pakistan considers the European Union's statement of 13 August 1999 on so-called "honour killings" as unwarranted and misplaced. The European Union's request to circulate this statement as a document of the United Nations General Assembly is unfortunate and propagates an erroneous and tendentious view.

2. The Government of Pakistan has condemned such abhorrent acts of murder termed as "honour killings" and is bound to deal with them in accordance with the law of the land and the constitution, which allows full protection and equality to all its citizens as well as for the empowerment and full participation of women in the national mainstream. Women enjoy a special and indeed elevated status in our religion.

3. The incident referred to by the European Union does not represent any consistent pattern, nor does it have religious or State sanction. It has evoked shock and indignation in our society. The remedy for any abhorrent customs, which are a residue from the past and inconsistent with contemporary norms and indeed also with Islamic teachings, is education and socio-economic development.

4. The European Union statement is all the more unacceptable because it appears to target Pakistan over an isolated incident, while ignoring incidents of large-scale violence against women and minorities elsewhere in the world. Especially surprising is the failure of the European Union to condemn the use of rape as an instrument of policy in Indian-occupied Kashmir, as part of the reign of terror and repression that has been unleashed upon the Kashmiri people by India.